

# MOBILITY

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

THOMAS H. KEAN, Governor

Vol. 4, No. 2

OCTOBER 1982

JOHN P. SHERIDAN, JR., Commissioner

## Budget deficit causes layoffs, slows work

Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr., admitting that "it was the toughest decision I've had to make since taking office," confirmed that 140 Transportation employees have been laid off and a hiring freeze placed in effect.

"As much as I dislike having to notify people that they are being laid off, it is absolutely necessary to bring the budget into balance," Sheridan said. He pointed out that the Department has received approximately \$7 million less than was necessary to operate the minimum program of a year ago.

The \$7 million is in addition to the \$12.5 million shortage in meeting the Department's needs for state aid and capital projects.

"And it is far short of what Governor Kean has asked to carry out his program

to rehabilitate the state's transportation system," Sheridan said.

"One of my chief concerns is the long-range impact on the Department. On the construction engineering side of the Department we are losing valuable young professionals whose departure will slow up environmental work, road design, right-of-way acquisition and all the programs that lead up to the awarding of construction contracts," Sheridan said.

"The maintenance effort, which is already underfunded, will also be hit severely by this loss of positions. I'm particularly concerned about the Department's ability to respond if we have a severe winter," he added.

Loss of staff and the budget shortfall will cause even greater curtailment of "cosmetic" maintenance efforts such as mowing and litter pick-up and "basic" maintenance including snow removal, drainage, guide rail, sign and road strip-

ing work.

Priority will be given to "safety" projects. Installation of new traffic signals will be postponed except where safety is the major reason for the installation.

The budget adopted by the Legislature provides no funding for the state share of federally-funded projects on local highways. Commissioner Sheridan notified all county freeholders in July of the proposed projects affected by the lack of funding and offered the counties the option of funding any or all of the postponed projects themselves.

In addition to the layoffs, Sheridan said more than 250 additional positions will be lost in the months ahead. He said he is hopeful this can be handled through attrition rather than additional layoffs.

In a breakdown of savings, the Com-  
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## Heat attacks aging bridges

An outbreak of heat prostration and work burnout struck the state's aged drawbridges this summer. The advanced age of the equipment, combined with humid weather, resulted in an epidemic of burned out motors and coils, switch failures, shorted and grounded out electric cables and stalled traffic.

While heat and old age were the immediate cause of the drawbridge problems, the main cause was DOT's funding crisis. Lack of funds has prevented any major upgrading of electrical systems in the drawbridges, which are 40 years old or older.

Despite frequent breakdowns, limited maintenance funds and hard-to-find replacement parts, Department workers were usually able to correct the problems which occurred this summer.

The most severe traffic problem last summer took place on Sunday, July 25, on Route 147 in North Wildwood when the Grass Sound Bridge became stuck in an open position.

It was necessary to dispatch a traffic signal mechanic, who was working west of Hammonton, to make repairs. His diagnosis: burnout of an electrical coil which controls the machinery brake.

The Department staffs operate 26 drawbridges from Newark to Wildwood on the state highway system.



## Market St., Trenton, completed

Trenton Mayor Arthur J. Holland, Governor Thomas H. Kean and NJDOT Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr., officiated at the ceremony which reopened a widened and renovated Market St., Trenton, this summer. It was resurfaced and landscaped and traffic signals, brick sidewalks, a center island and simulated gas street lights were installed.

With the reopening, Market Street will provide improved access to the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, the Trenton Railroad Station, the central business district and U.S. Route 1, while maintaining the historic character of the Mill Hill area.

Conti Contruction Company, Inc., of South Plainfield, the contractor on the seven-tenths of a mile, \$2 million project, completed this job four months ahead of schedule. It was funded 100 percent by the state.

## Fall is fine for bike tours

NJDOT's Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocate suggests three "theme" bicycle tour routes for this fall:

**Mercer/Hunterdon Hills Tour:** This includes passage over the last remaining covered bridge in New Jersey and is ablaze with fall foliage this month.

**Pine Barrens Tour:** This is easy riding on South Jersey terrain through unique ecology. Pine and oak/pine forests, blueberry fields, cranberry bogs, meandering cedar-lined streams. Chatsworth, the "capitol" of the Pines, and historic Batsto are also en route.

**Great Swamp Tour:** Several loops meander in and around the Great Swamp Natural Wildlife Refuge just north of the Watchungs in Morris and Somerset Counties.

Before embarking on any of these tours, the following is suggested: make sure your bicycle is in proper working order, and practice easy rides to sharpen your skills.

Detailed route descriptions are available from NJDOT, Room 138, 1035 Parkway Avenue, CN 600, Trenton, NJ 08628.

## Budget deficits

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missioner said the Department will save \$4,200,000 through layoffs, attrition and overtime reduction.

Other non-salaried savings will amount to \$2.4 million.

Layoffs will come in the maintenance division, construction engineering, planning and administration.

"We've tried to make the cuts as prudently as possible," Sheridan said, "but it is obvious these cutbacks will have a severe impact on the Department."

The Commissioner pointed out that the layoff notices and the accompanying job freeze were handled in accordance with Civil Service procedure.

## DRIVE SAFELY

MOBILITY is a publication of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Division of Communications/Community Relations, to inform the general public about the Department and its activities. If you want to be on the mailing list, write to MOBILITY, Bureau of Publications, New Jersey Department of Transportation, 1035 Parkway Ave., CN 600, Trenton, N.J. 08625.

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Where I-78 runs through the Watchung Reservation, the roadway will be constructed below grade level, as shown in the sketch above.

## Headway made on 40 new miles

Significant progress was made this summer on closing the critical gaps in the state's interstate highway system and work is soon to begin on a long-awaited state highway project. The projects will add almost 40 miles of new highways which are expected to cost about \$900 million.

### Interstate Route 287

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) gave final environmental approval to a 20-mile section of Interstate Route 287 through Morris, Passaic and Bergen Counties in September.

The \$500 million project will link the present terminus in Montville to the New York State Thruway in Suffern (NY). The link rounds out a critically needed bypass around the New York Metropolitan area and is considered a vital link in the nation-wide Interstate System by both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Defense Department.

Bids have been received for improvements to the existing Interstate Route 287 from north of the Passaic River to the vicinity of the Somerset-Middlesex County Line in Harding Township, Morris County and Bernards and Franklin Townships and Far Hills, Somerset County.

Work on this 19.9-mile project includes resurfacing, installation of guide rail and concrete barrier curb and structural bridge items. The project is funded 90 percent by the federal government and 10 percent by the state.

### Interstate Route 78

NJDOT received bids for the construction of the unfinished portion of Interstate 78 in Union County in September.

"The completion of this 5.5 mile gap in I-78 is one of the Department's highest priorities," said Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr.

The FHWA approved the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the link in December 1980. The preferred alignment skirts the northern edge of the Watchung Reservation, a 2,000-acre recreation area. Only 70 acres of park land will actually be needed and plans call for the construction of "cut-and-cover" structures which will provide landscaped crossovers across the highway (see illustration).

### Route 55

The first contract for construction of Route 55 will be advertised for bids late this year. The contract will cover a 1.7-mile stretch between Cooper Street and Route 42 in Deptford Township, Gloucester County.

Bids for the second and third contracts to complete the northern seven miles are tentatively scheduled for advertisement in late 1983 and 1984 respectively but will be contingent upon availability of funds.

### Trenton Complex

The Department recently held a public hearing concerning the completion of Routes I-295, I-195, 29 and 129, also known as the Trenton Complex. Comments made by the citizens who attended this hearing are being made part of the report which will be submitted to the FHWA. The first construction contract for I-295 from Kuser Road to Arena Drive is scheduled to be advertised for construction this fall.

# NJDOT investigates plane accidents

On Sunday, August 15, a fiery crash of a single-engine Beechcraft airplane occurred near the Mercer County Airport. Within minutes after the accident, an NJDOT aeronautical operations specialist was on the scene, sealing off the area and beginning his investigation.

NJDOT's Division of Aeronautics has seven aeronautical operations specialists who stand ready to investigate air mishaps 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They provide accident reports to the Transportation Commission and Governor, coordinating their investigations with those of the Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board.

At the scene of the accident, the specialist secures the area with local police to prevent further injuries, documents the mishap with photos or drawings, interviews witnesses and crew and obtains official documents, such as maintenance logs on the aircraft, its engine and propellers. The specialist also determines if the pilot was properly certified to fly the aircraft.

A maintenance expert may be brought in to examine the engine. If there is a fatality, an autopsy and a toxicological analysis performed by the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio are required.

According to Arlene Butler Feldman, NJDOT's Director of Aeronautics, the cause can be determined in over 95 percent of the accidents. Mechanical failure accounts for less than 10 percent of the air accidents in New Jersey, according to DOT records. The human

judgment factor accounts for 80 percent, with "fender benders" 90 percent of the total.

By the end of August, air accidents in New Jersey reached 40, down from the usual 50 to 60 during an eight month period.

Air travel continues to be one of the safest modes of transportation in the United States. FAA 1980 statistics reveal that there were 51,676 highway and 1,555 marine fatalities, compared to 1,389 aviation fatalities.

## New from Aeronautics

NJDOT's Division of Aeronautics announced the following new offerings:

- 1982 Airport Directory, newly revised listing of airport facilities in New Jersey will be available after January, 1983
- Heliport Directory, a first, will be available October 1982
- Aeronautics Resource Library has been established in the Division of

Aeronautics headquarters located at Mercer County Airport

- Aerospace Education Program, an all-encompassing, on-going, kindergarten to college to community program, offering topics such as careers, safety and airport locations. Speakers, tours, classroom presentations information seminars can be arranged by calling the Division at 609-292-3020.

# Department engineer moves Cape May County traffic

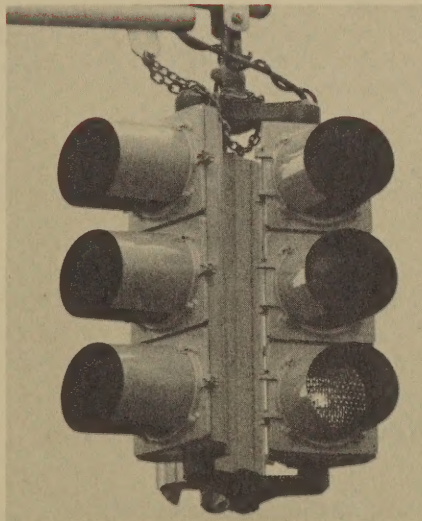
For most people, the trip from Belleville (Essex County) to Cape May Court House (Cape May County) takes a few hours via the Garden State Parkway. For John McCarthy, the DOT traffic engineer assigned to Cape May County, the trip took 10 years and was made via Alabama.

As it turns out, McCarthy's return to New Jersey has been a stroke of good fortune for Cape May municipalities which, until then, had always felt a bit like poor relatives. The DOT had to convince the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that Cape May County had a backlog of traffic engineering problems so significant that a full-time field investigator was needed. Last year, the FHWA agreed and provided the funding needed to set up in an office on Mechanic Street in Cape May Court House.

McCarthy's professional expertise and personal devotion to finding solutions to the area's transportation problems have already been appreciated by residents and vacationers in the Wildwoods and Cape May.

McCarthy's most recent project, updating a traffic control system in North Wildwood which was characterized by the Cape May Gazette Leader as "antiquated (and) haphazard . . . designed to impede rather than permit the flow of cars," drew a written commendation from Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr.

Working with officials in North Wildwood through a DOT county-wide traffic



signal improvement project, McCarthy devised a traffic plan which has already eliminated 53 traffic signals and will cut out another eight by the time the plan is fully implemented. Using actual traffic counts, McCarthy targeted the major through streets and arranged a new pattern of signals so that they can be easily re-timed to serve traffic needs not only during the shore season but during the off-season as well.

The system has been so successful that the number of accidents in North Wildwood this summer decreased dramatically in spite of an increase in the amount of traffic moving through the town. And to top it all off, the entire project has cost a fraction of the usual price since McCarthy's plan recycles the  
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## Companies consider ridesharing

Executive ridesharing seminars are bringing the personal and corporate benefits of car and vanpooling to hundreds of top-level decision-makers in New Jersey companies.

DOT's Division of Ridesharing and the New Jersey Department of Energy have been sponsoring seminars statewide which are actually hosted by private corporations. This fall they will be held by SONY, which recently relocated to Park Ridge, and the Atlantic City Electric Company.

Each seminar attracts representatives

from local businesses and chambers of commerce and introduces them to the variety of services NJDOT can provide from applications for interest-free loans to purchase vans to the free computer-matching of employees within an organization or within a geographical area in which several companies may be located. Other local transportation issues, including road projects, are also presented.

For further ridesharing information, call 609-292-4934.



Carolyn S. McCallum

## Former mayor named aide

Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr., has named Carolyn S. McCallum, former South Brunswick mayor, his legislative assistant.

"Mrs. McCallum comes to NJDOT with two decades of government experience," Sheridan said. "She'll be a strong advocate for the Department in the State House."

The Kendall Park resident, a former manager of Customer Services for the Remington Rand Corporation, served five years on the South Brunswick Township Committee, one of them as mayor. She points with pride to the \$11 million in new ratables for four consecutive years and reduced property taxes during this time. "We worked closely with Middlesex County and the State Department of Environmental Protection to solve planning, water resource and waste management problems," she said.

Mrs. McCallum also served for eight years on the South Brunswick Township Board of Education, two of them as its president. She was a member of the Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee and has administered a wide variety of programs: the Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corporation, South Brunswick Citizens for Planning, Delaware-Raritan Girl Scout Council and political campaigns.

The Mount Holyoke graduate holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and Sociology. She is the recipient of the South Brunswick Jaycees "Outstanding Citizen" Award in 1974 and the Raritan Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce Award in 1979.

Mrs. McCallum and her husband, William, are the parents of three college students.

## BRIEFS

### Governor's study

More than 1,000 DOT employees who supervise others took part in the Governor's Management Study on August 24. An average of one hour was spent by each supervisor in analyzing on a four page form the percentage of time they and their subordinates spend on specific categories of tasks.

The survey is being coordinated by Scientific Management Corporation, a consultant hired by the Governor's Office of Management Services. The data will be reviewed by an appointed blue-ribbon panel of major corporate executives and the Department's top management who will make recommendations for improving Department operations based on the survey data.

Transportation is one of the first of the state agencies to take part in the Governor's study.

### Trans/Action draws 300

Trans/Action, the Sixth Annual State-wide Transportation Conference which took place on October 3, 4 and 5 at the Molly Pitcher Inn, Red Bank, drew 300 participants.

This year's sponsors were NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, the County Transportation Association and the New Jersey Alliance for Action. There were also 20 co-sponsoring agencies.

Guest speakers included Governor Thomas H. Kean, Commissioner John P. Sheridan, Jr., Congressman James J. Howard, NJ TRANSIT Executive Director Jerome C. Premo; George Takei, a member of the Southern California Rapid Transit Board; members of the New Jersey Legislature and local officials.

NEW JERSEY  
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## New buildings

Construction will begin this winter on a seven-story office building and a one-story technical services building behind the present NJDOT headquarters in Ewing Township.

The buildings will house 1,000 employees and will consolidate 14 offices now spread throughout Mercer County.

The two-year construction project is being financed and managed by the new State Building Authority.

## Asbestos removed

Removal of asbestos material from the Department's Headquarters Annex Building was completed this summer.

The fireproofing material was removed from the 12-year-old structure before it became a health hazard. The 400 employees normally housed in the building were given temporary quarters during the eight month project.

## Cape May

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hardware being removed and uses it again in the locations which remain signalized.

McCarthy, a 29-year-old native of Jersey City, began his roundabout trek back to New Jersey by enrolling in the civil engineering program at Auburn (A) University after a two-year hitch with the U.S. Naval Reserve.

After receiving both a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering, McCarthy worked on a variety of jobs for private engineering firms headquartered in Alabama and Tennessee. Much of his work centered on assessing and solving traffic problems in several Alabama municipalities until he joined the Alabama Highway Department in 1978 as an assistant state highway engineer.

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